

Ambassador Brazil-bound

JOE WOODARD FOR NEIGHBOURS

Trade ambassadors start young. Calgary student Brittany McLeod, 17, has been selected as one of 35 young Canadians on the 2005 Junior Team Canada international mission to Brazil.

Like the big federal junkets to potential trading partners, for two weeks in mid-August, Junior Team Canada will meet with Brazilian business, government, education and youth leaders, promoting Canadian products, services and partnership opportunities.

Unlike the big federal junkets, however, McLeod herself must raise \$4,000 by Aug. 1 in matching funds from community and corporate sponsors. She will then represent those organization in Brazil.

"The oil and gas and the environmental sectors come into the same category, because oil and gas companies are very concerned with the environment," said McLeod, a dance and voice student at Central Memorial performing arts high school.

"So I'm getting some support from the Sierra Club of Calgary, and I'm trying for sponsorships from corporations downtown. But Stampede is a bad time to be doing this, so I am a little anxious about the sponsorships."

The Junior Team Canada mission to Brazil is organized by the group Global Vision, based in Gatineau (Hull), Que., and funded by the federal government. Global Vision will be arranging some meetings with relevant Brazilian organizations. But the young trade ambassadors will also have to make "cold calls" to important commercial and social groups, networking and gathering key market and cultural intelligence for their sponsors.

"I'm excited," said McLeod.

"The government has already identified Brazil as a main economy it wants to focus on, an emerging economy in oil and gas, mining, telecommunications and things like that. And there are already Canadian oil companies working down there, so there should be lots of opportunities."

McLeod was selected to join the team of 35 junior ambassadors from more than 500 applicants to Global Vision's (www.gvconnects.com) 2005 national competition. She said that her experience with Irish dancing, model UN and her school debating club was evidence that she is a good team member.

Since 1991, more than 500 students have joined Junior Team Canada missions to 15 countries, from Argentina to Taiwan.

They have been supported by over 500 companies and organizations, and team members have produced more than 400 market reports for their supporters.

"The purpose of Junior Team Canada is to give youth a chance to be ambassadors for their country, their communities and Canadian businesses," says JTC project officer Nathan Liss in Ottawa.

Brittany's mother, Pam McLeod, wasn't surprised by her daughter's selection for Junior Team Canada.

"She's a go-getter, 16 going on 25," Pam says, "and always been interested in politics and international affairs."

Anyone wishing to support Brittany McLeod on the Junior Team Canada mission to Brazil may contact her at brittanyedenmcleod@yahoo.com.

JWOODARD@THEHERALD.CANWEST.COM



Dean Bicknell, Calgary Herald Brittany McLeod, 17, is on a mission to raise \$4,000 in matching funds for a 2005 Junior Team Canada International trade trip to Brazil.